

State Dept. Denies Korea Palace Bugging

United Press International

The State Department still maintains the United States never bugged the South Korean presidential palace, despite a contrary report from the former U.S. ambassador to Seoul.

The diplomat, now retired, is William Porter, ambassador to South Korea from 1967 to 1971 — a time of increasing political repression by President Park Chung Hee and a time when rice merchant Tongsun Park began thinking about lobbying Congress — with millions in cash — on behalf of his country.

Porter was asked in a CBS News documentary yesterday about reports the South Korean Blue House had been bugged by U.S. intelligence.

Porter replied, "I was told that it had stopped before my arrival." Pressed as to whether that meant it did occur before, he said, "Maybe it — I was told that it was not functioning and I gave a specific order that it was not to be renewed."

Asked why not, he said, "Because I didn't feel the risks warranted what we would get."

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